

## 5. Scholarly documentation in the Enlightenment: validation and interpretation

MARCUS WALSH

Martin Joseph Routh, distinguished English classical scholar, became president of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1791, at the age of thirty-five. He remained president of Magdalen for the remaining sixty-three years of his life. Towards the end of that tenure he was asked, by the Anglican divine J. W. Burgon (author of the winning Newdigate poem *Petra*, 1854), what advice he would give to a young don. Famously, Routh replied: 'You will find it a very good practice always to verify your references, sir!'<sup>1</sup> This pronouncement may sound like the pedantic prejudice of a hyperannuated don. I want to argue that, if not quite the law and the prophets, it is in fact a distillation of a founding principle of Enlightenment methodology.

This essay will address some issues in the practice of scholarly documentation in the later seventeenth century, and the eighteenth century, in France, the Low Countries and England. I will in particular examine the bearing of methods and theorisings of scholarly documentation on a number of broader intellectual issues. What vouchers are we to have of the accuracy and reliability of a work of textual editing or scholarship? How do we assess its good faith and responsibility? How are authorship and identity to be presented in scholarly documentation? What formal effect do methods of documentation have, not only on the layout of the page, but on the structures of writing, and on the experience of reading? And, last but not least, what significance do methods of documentation, especially the adduction of contextualising and validating materials, have for the interpretation and understanding of literary texts, classical and vernacular, in the scholarly edition?

Commentary on texts, more especially on the scriptures considered by any society sacred or classical, is of course very ancient: the Talmud, made up of the few volumes of Rules, called the Mishnah, attended by its proliferating volumes of comment, the Gemara; patristic commentaries on the Old and New Testaments; the *Glossa ordinaria* on the Vulgate; glosses by twelfth-century grammarians on Virgil or Horace; extended

1. See John William Burgon, *Lives of twelve good men* (London, 1889), vol.1, p.73.

sixteenth- and seventeenth-century commentaries on Greek and Latin authors, culminating in the great variorum editions of later seventeenth-century Dutch scholars. Developed scholarly documentation, auto-commentary which identifies and sometimes quotes sources in support and validation of an assertion, is a distinguishable, and for the most part a later phenomenon.

As Anthony Grafton points out, 'precise citation comes with professionalisation'. It is distinctively an expert and a modern practice. It was not, and still is not, a habit of amateur or gentlemanly humanism. The development of methods and forms of citation is associated at the beginning of the long eighteenth century with the development of a modern, professional historiography and philology, as it had been associated with the scholars of the new universities of the twelfth century.

Scholarly writing, like other forms of writing, has its different genres. Citation works differently, from structural and intellectual as well as merely formal points of view, from scholarly genre to scholarly genre. Grafton makes a particularly clear, and entirely persuasive, distinction between the apparatus of modern historical writing and the apparatus of literary annotation, the explanatory or text-critical notes provided by an editor in relation to a divine or secular scripture.<sup>2</sup>

In the early Enlightenment, however, modern procedures of citation were developed by the writers of a number of different kinds of scholarly discourse, including biblical criticism, literary scholarship, the encyclopaedia and indeed the literary edition. I should like to discuss some areas of interplay, methodological, evidential, formal and epistemological.

I begin with a French work, the *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament* (1689) by Richard Simon, Oratorian priest, and the leading biblical historian and textual critic of his time. Simon had already published, some nine years earlier, his companion *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1680). Both these learned, innovative and sophisticated works were at once translated into English, were widely read, and became significant texts for the energetic 1680s English debate about the nature, reliability and interpretation of the Bible.<sup>3</sup> In the earlier work, *A Critical history of the Old Testament*, Simon set out his policy of documentation:

afin de me rendre utile à tout le monde je me suis le plus souvent contenté de rapporter en abrégé & selon le sens seulement les témoignages des Auteurs

2. Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: a curious history* (London, 1997), p.31-33.

3. See Richard Simon, *A Critical history of the Old Testament. Written originally in French by Father Simon [...] and since translated into English by a person of quality* (London, Walter Davis, 1682); and Richard Simon, *A Critical history of the text of the New Testament* (London, R. Taylor, 1689).

dont je me suis servi, ny ayant rien de si ennuyeux que de longues citations de passages où il ny a quelquefois que cinq ou six mots qui soient nécessaires. Je n'ay eu autre dessein dans tout cet Ouvrage que de dire beaucoup de choses en peu de mots, & afin qu'on ajoûte plus de foy à mes citations j'ay mis à la fin du livre un Catalogue des Auteurs peu connus qui ont été cités.<sup>4</sup>

These are the words of a scholar concerned, at this point in his career, not to appear pedantically otiose. The testimonies of authors are not reproduced in contextualising full, but reduced within his text to a minimum, making life easier for his readers by maintaining discursive flow. References are provided as marginal notes, which identify quoted scriptural passages, as well as the authors and often the titles of his secondary sources. Simon follows a very common contemporary practice by providing bibliographical citations for his references not at the point of quotation, but as a group, 'à la fin du livre': 'Catalogues des principales Editions de la Bible', divided into separate sections for the Bible's various languages, and 'Catalogue des Autheurs Juifs, & de quelques autres Autheurs, peu connus, qui ont été citez dans l'Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament'.

In his later work, however, the *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament*, Simon's page looks rather different, and his Preface gives an account of highly significant methodological changes:

Pour ce qui est des Manuscrits, j'ay marqué les Bibliothèques où ils se trouvent, & je n'en ay cité aucun que je n'aye lû, & dont je n'aye fait moy-même les extraits, à la réserve de celui de Cambridge [...]. A l'égard des Livres imprimés dont on a aussi cité un assez grand nombre, je me suis le plus souvent contenté d'en rapporter les passages en abrégé & selon le sens seulement dans le corps de l'Ouvrage. [...] C'est la méthode qu'on a suivie dans l'Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament. Mais quelques personnes ayant souhaité qu'on rapportât au long ces passages pour leur épargner la peine de les chercher dans les Livres imprimés, on a tâché de les satisfaire là-dessus, sans néanmoins changer rien de nôtre première méthode. On les a mis au bas des pages, où chacun pourra les lire dans toute leur étendue, & dans la langue des Auteurs.<sup>5</sup>

Here Simon makes altogether more explicit his precision and responsibility. As before, there are marginal notes, providing references for citations (normally repeated in the footnotes), but now the references are fuller and more precise, identifying author, work, chapter or book number, and sometimes page number. The provenance of manuscript sources is identified, and his own personal involvement in the process of transcription and quotation is made clear (quotation at second hand or

4. Richard Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Paris, 1680), Preface, b4r-v.

5. Richard Simon, *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament, Où l'on établit la vérité des actes sur lesquels la religion chrétienne est fondée* (Rotterdam, Reinier Leers, 1689), Preface, A4v.

from memory had been, and would continue to be, not uncommon in scholarly writing). Validating quotations from printed books are again numerous, an evidential practice not followed by gentleman humanist writers, nor even at this date by some professional scholars.<sup>6</sup> Such quotations in the body of Simon's text remain short, maintaining the continuity of the argument, but now, crucially, there are footnotes, in which the quotations are provided at substantially greater length, providing the key words quoted in the text with their meaning-defining context. Like many another author's, Simon's Preface speaks a language of courtesy and compliance to the wishes of his readers; but the effect on the page, aesthetic and functional, is much in keeping with the evidential foundations and interlinking precision of his own scholarship.

Footnotes were new in critical discourse of the kind Richard Simon was writing.<sup>7</sup> Explanatory footnotes, as well as marginalia, had indeed long been employed in the fulsome annotations found in editions of the Greek and Latin classics. A reader would find them, for example, in a 1654 Petronius as well as the 1696 Lambin Horace. They are employed on a large scale and with massive evidential weight in such monuments of the new philology of the latter seventeenth century as Bishop John Fell's great edition of the works of Cyprian, 'e Theatro Sheldoniano' (Oxford, 1682), and Richard Bentley's ground-breaking Malalas, *Joannis Antiocheni cognomento malalae historia chronica* (Oxford, 1691). Now, however, footnotes would become a key method and key sign of scholarly modernity not only in editorial but also in critical, biographical and encyclopaedic discourse. They are an important but far from sole element of a set of newly prominent apparatuses: catalogues, contents lists, glossaries, commentaries, indexes, bibliographies, all of them sequential, list-like, divisible, more or less Ramist, rather than narrative or continuous or discursive. Anthony Grafton, again focussing on the discipline and practice of history, but emphasising the union of history with philology, insists that this is not only a formal but also a methodological and epistemological change:

The appearance of footnotes – and such related devices as documentary and critical appendices – separates historical modernity from tradition. [...] Footnotes are the outward and visible signs of [...] the grace infused into

6. For a particularly decisive example, see Henry Felton, *A Dissertation on reading the classics* (London, Jonah Bowyer, 1713): 'I had a Mind to be the first Modern that ever composed a Piece of this Nature without the Pomp of Quotations; and since I did not see the Necessity of it, I was willing to avoid all Ostentation of Learning' (p.iii; see also p.ix-xi, 36).
7. The arrival of the footnote as a key element in such scholarly genres at this historical moment has been demonstrated and documented by such scholars as Gérard Genette, *Thresholds of interpretation*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge, 1997), from p.319; Lawrence Lipking, *The Ordering of the arts in eighteenth-century England* (Princeton, NJ, 1970), from p.66, 352; and Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote*, especially ch.7.

history when it was transformed from an eloquent narrative into a critical discipline. At this point, systematic scrutiny and citation of original evidence and formal arguments for the preferability of one source over another became necessary and attractive pursuits for historians. [...] the footnote's rise to high social [...] position took place when it became legitimate, after history and philology, its parents, finally married.<sup>8</sup>

The footnote is modern, modernist, philological. The use of the footnote, and the associated lists, divisions and addenda of the new learning, enact a transition from an older, narrative history or philological scholarship to a new scholarly humanism.

The most influential, and the most notorious, manifestation of the new scholarly documentation was Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, first published in Paris in 1696. In Bayle's *Dictionnaire* the torrent of Bayle's own footnotes overwhelmed the text of the original core articles on men and places. Bayle had begun with a critical endeavour, the exposure of the false and mistaken in previous historical writing. That purpose developed, in his *Dictionnaire*, into what was not merely a new methodology, but in some respects a new epistemology, based on the essential intellectual problem of how particular facts might be established and evidenced. As Ernst Cassirer puts it, 'the accumulation of well-established facts is for Bayle the Archimedean point on which he seeks to base all knowledge'.<sup>9</sup> For Bayle, pertinacious accuracy and utmost good faith are desiderata in the quest for what can credibly be known. Precision and fullness of reference, and exactness of quotation, are not mere matters of presentation (to use that favourite diminishing word of modern academia), but precisely the methods by which inaccuracies of report and sloppiness of thinking are demolished. They stand for Bayle always above considerations of 'the lively and natural agreeableness of the expression'.

In many places Bayle provided explicit statements of his principles and methods. In the Preface to the first French edition, Bayle set out the division of his work into two parts, one 'purement Historique' and giving 'un Narré succinct des Faits', the second 'un grand Commentaire, un melange de Preuves & de Discussions, où je fais entrer la Censure de plusieurs Fautes', of Louis Moréri and other encyclopaedia writers.<sup>10</sup> It is in his voluminous footnotes, his 'large commentary', that Bayle battled

8. Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote*, p.23-24.

9. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, translated by Fritz A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton, NJ, 1951), p.201-202.

10. P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique, par Mr Pierre Bayle*, 4 vols, 5th edn (Amsterdam, P. Brunel, 1740), vol.1, p. ii. Louis Moréri's *Grand dictionnaire historique* was first published in Lyon in 1674 (Lyon, J. Gyrin et B. Rivière, 1674). For extended discussion of Bayle, see Grafton, *The Footnote*, p.190-214; Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p.201-209.

traditional, abstract and general historiography, attempting to establish such truths as the discipline of history could credibly reach, through detailed citation and reference.

Bayle has in particular much to say about the different possible practices of quotation, and their implications. His Preface sets out his own principles and methods in detail. He is aware of the need for scrupulous honesty in citation and quotation, because, as he puts it, 'il s'est commis beaucoup de supercheries dans les citations des Auteurs'.<sup>11</sup> He insists on the demonstrative value of having words quoted on the page, and not merely the reference, believing that readers: 'aiment mieux rencontrer dans le livre même qu'ils ont sous les yeux, les propres paroles des Auteurs qu'on prend pour temoins'. He sees translation of his sources as another potential cause of error and misrepresentation, and avoids any suspicion of fraud by making every witness speak in his native language: 'j'ai fait parler chaque témoin en sa langue naturelle'. Despite the risk of prolixity, he ensures that quotations are given fully enough for their meaning to be determined by their original textual context: 'j'ai allongé quelquefois cet endroit-là & par la tête, & par la queue, afin que l'on comprit mieux de quoi il étoit question.'<sup>12</sup> He repeats all of these positions and more, with added emphasis, in the course of a long note to a sentence, in the entry on Epicurus, which reads: 'Il écrivit beaucoup de Livres, & il se piquoit de ne rien citer.' There are, Bayle tells us, two classes of writers who quote. The first do no more than pillage from modern authors, collect the compilations of others, verify nothing, do not consult the original, pay no heed to the surrounding context, and do not even transcribe their quotations, simply referring their printer to the location of the passages. This is an easy way to make large books. However, there is a second class of quoters, to whom Bayle himself plainly belongs,

qui ne se fient qu'à eux-mêmes; ils veulent tout vérifier, ils vont toujours à la source, ils examinent quel a été le but de l'Auteur, ils ne s'arrêtent pas au Passage dont ils ont besoin, ils considèrent avec attention ce qui le précède, ce qui le suit. Ils tâchent de faire de belles applications [...] D'ailleurs ce peuvent être des gens qui se font une religion, dans les matieres de fait, de n'avancer rien sans preuve. S'ils disent qu'un tel Philosophe Grec croioit ceci ou cela, qu'un tel Sénateur ou Capitaine Romain suivoit certaines maximes, ils en produisent les preuves tout aussi-tôt; & parce qu'en certaines occasions la singularité de la chose demande plusieurs témoignages, ils en ramassent plusieurs.<sup>13</sup>

11. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, vol.1, p.vi.

12. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, vol.1, p.vi.

13. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, vol.2, p.367a.

Responsible scholars take nothing on anyone's word – *nullius in verba* – but verify (as the Royal Society had required and Routh would recommend) all for themselves. They return directly to their primary text, and do not confine themselves to the 'Passages in short' (to use Richard Simon's phrase) which might be used in running prose, but take into account the larger verbal context and broader argument of their author. They make 'fine applications' ('belles applications') of their quotations, that is, they consider carefully their evidential pertinence. Where a matter is difficult, they understand the value of multiple supporting testimony.

All of these practices are as appropriate, it seems to me, to the editor who writes explanatory annotations on a literary text as they are to a professional historian. They are not only good scholarly procedure, but hermeneutic; especially in two of the areas that Bayle here defines. Firstly, in the interpretation of any text, it is not enough for material adduced, toward the explanation of any passage, to be part of some broad context; rather, it must have a precise and significant bearing. It must, that is, be a 'fine application', or, in a more modern and philosophical terminology, it must bear on the narrow class of the crux. Secondly, material so adduced must be quoted at sufficient length not only to establish its meaning in its original context, but also to clarify its hermeneutic effect. Bayle's age was especially aware of one kind of 'supercherie dans les citations des Auteurs', that is, the quotation so selected and abbreviated as to misrepresent the original and deceive the reader. The most frequent and dangerous type of such fraud occurred in quotation from the Bible, where textual perversion was made especially easy by the spurious division of the text into chapter and verse. By this, John Locke argued, the defining context and discursive coherence which are necessary conditions for interpreting the meaning of the text are lost, making it easy 'to snatch out a few Words, as if they were separate from the rest, to serve a Purpose'.<sup>14</sup> Cyprian's *Of the unity of the Church* warned schismatics not to 'decieve themselves with a false exposition of what the Lord hath said' in Matthew 18.19-20, which reads, in full:

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

14. J. Locke, *A Paraphrase and notes on the Epistles of St Paul to the Galatians [...] To which is prefix'd, an essay for the understanding of St Paul's Epistles, by consulting St Paul himself*, 2nd edn (London, Awnsham and John Churchill, 1709), p.viii-ix.

‘These corrupters of the Gospel, and false interpreters of it’, Cyprian points out, ‘produce the last clause, and pass over the antecedent parts of the discourse’, alleging as a justification of their schism the second verse, but eliding the first verse which makes clear that ‘the force and success of prayer was not to be imputed to the number of supplicants, but the unanimity of them’. I quote from John Fell’s translation, published in Oxford in 1681, and explicitly aimed at the contemporary ‘domestic dissensions’ which, for him and many others, paralleled the situation of the early Church which Cyprian had described and addressed.<sup>15</sup>

In this same decade the Swiss biblical scholar and exegete Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736) made a particularly explicit contribution to the discussion regarding the responsibilities of scholarship, and the need for and desirable format of documentation, in his *Parrhasiana, ou Pensées diverses sur des matières de critique, d’histoire, de morale et de politique* (1699). In the course of this miscellaneous work Le Clerc addressed what was plainly at this historical moment a hotly contested question: ‘On demande si ceux, qui écrivent l’Histoire ancienne, ou au moins une Histoire, dont il n’y ait plus de témoins vivans, doivent citer les Auteurs, dont ils se servent, à chaque page, ou à chaque article.’<sup>16</sup> On the one hand are those who claim an older kind of professional authority for the historian, an insistence on implicit trust, on respect for what is handed down, for tradition: ‘Les uns croient qu’il n’est nullement nécessaire de citer, & que le Lecteur se doit fier au choix & à la sincérité de l’Historien’.<sup>17</sup> For such a scholar it is enough to publish ‘une liste des Historiens qu’il a consultez, au commencement ou à la fin de son Histoire’. On the other hand are those, clearly approved by Le Clerc, who insist that historians ‘doivent citer les Auteurs, dont ils se servent, à chaque page, ou à chaque article’. The decisive preference of detailed reference and citation in proof of every particular point of an argument, over a general list of authorities which has to serve as umbrella validation for an entire discourse, is of course the same as that enacted in practice by Richard Simon between his 1682 *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* and his 1687 *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament*. For the Modern Le Clerc, the ancient historians were entirely mistaken in failing to cite at all points. We must not follow them. Not only for history, but for the other arts and sciences, the republic of letters has become ‘un pãis de raison &

15. Saint Cyprian, *Of the unity of the Church: a discourse written a thousand four hundred and thirty years since, in the time of Decius the persecuting emperor*, translated by John Fell (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1681), p.16-17.

16. Jean Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana, ou Pensées diverses sur des matières de critique, d’histoire, de morale et de politique*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: les héritiers de A. Schelte, 1699-1701), vol.1, p.144.

17. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.145.



de lumière, & non d'autorité & de foi aveugle'.<sup>18</sup> *Sapere aude*; this is a new kind of authority for all kinds of scholarship, and a basis for a new and different professionalism.

*Parrhasiana* covers many provinces of the republic of humanistic letters as well as the discipline of history. Le Clerc's survey includes a chapter on the '*Décadence dans les belles-lettres*, which focuses particularly, as he puts it, on 'érudition'. Why, asks Le Clerc, have there not thrived in recent years any critics to match the greatest of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Joseph Scaliger and Lipsius, Casaubon and Salmasius, Grotius and Selden? The decay has been caused, Le Clerc argues, by sins of commission and omission; and, amongst the sins of omission, he is particularly concerned by the lack of 'de bonnes éditions de tous les Auteurs Grecs & Latins, non seulement correctes pour le Texte, mais accompagnées de tout ce qui est nécessaire, pour le rendre plus intelligible'.<sup>19</sup> Le Clerc's discussion insists repeatedly on the need for editions which explicate their texts, which make their meanings available to readers of all kinds. Readers need, and seek to find, notes 'qui expliquent les endroits obscurs [...pour] savoir exactement le sens d'un passage'. It is not enough for scholars to confine themselves, as too many have done, exclusively to textual matters, to write 'de pures notes de Critique, qui regardent seulement la manière de lire' ('meer critical Notes, about the true Reading'), 'de pointiller sur quelques endroits, où l'on trouve des varietez de lecture' ('to Quibble about some various Readings').<sup>20</sup> Le Clerc stipulates, certainly, that we should have editions of classic authors 'revûs sur les anciens MSS. qui nous restent' ('revised upon such ancient Manuscripts as we have'); but such editions should be explicated and illustrated, too, 'par des notes courtes, nettes & méthodiques'.<sup>21</sup> The mere occasional parade of learning will not suffice. Too many learned editors, 's'ils ont ajouté quelque chose pour l'intelligence des expressions, des opinions, ou des coutumes, ce na été que sur quelques entroits'. Le Clerc demands thorough editorial explication of the text, founded not on assertion but on evidence, vouchsafed, just as he required of historical writing, by full and detailed documentation:

Des Notes conçues en bons termes, en peu de mots, & où l'on n'avance rien sans le prouver, ou sans indiquer au moins quelque bon Auteur, où l'on puisse voir la verification de ce qu'on dit; en marquant si bien l'endroit, qu'il soit facile au Lecteur de le trouver.<sup>22</sup>

18. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.145.

19. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.226.

20. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.227, 229.

21. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.226-27.

22. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.229.

Le Clerc becomes yet more explicit regarding the formal and substantial requirements of editorial explanatory apparatus when he goes on to discuss the variorum edition, at this date a new, Dutch, development, in which ‘des gens de Lettres [...] ont entrepris en nôtre siècle [...] de compiler des Notes tirées des divers Critiques, qui avoient travaillé sur les meilleurs Auteurs, ou qui les avoient expliquez en passant dans d’autres Ouvrages’.<sup>23</sup> Sadly, such editions were at first undertaken by men ‘not qualified’ for the task,<sup>24</sup> and provide Le Clerc with an occasion for enumerating the interpretative and documentary responsibilities of which they fell so far short: ‘Souvent ils ont choisi le moindre, ils n’ont apporté aucune des preuves des Auteurs qu’ils ont abregez, & ils ont entierement estropié leurs pensées. Pour mettre des Notes par tout, ils ont autant parlé sur les endroits clairs, que sur ceux qui sont obscurs, & ont rempli leurs recueils de digressions inutiles, ou hors de propos.’<sup>25</sup> The echoes of Bayle’s insistence not only on proofs, but on faithful quotation, are clear enough here. Later variorum editions of the classics have substantially improved on this, but two desiderata remain. The first is that ‘ceux qui font ces recueils ne missent au dessous du Texte que des Notes, qui servissent à l’intelligence des expressions, des opinions, des coutumes &c.’, leaving the fuller and more extended notes to the back of the volume. The second is ‘que ces Notes de divers Auteurs fussent rangées en sorte, qu’on n’eût qu’à chercher en un seul endroit’.<sup>26</sup> For Le Clerc the variorum edition, like any learned literary edition, must be a thing of use to the reader. Its explanatory notes must be brief, to the linguistic and contextualising interpretative purpose, readily grouped where they may bear on the particular place, clearly, fully and honestly documented. They must be a vehicle for humanistic communication of knowledge that leads to understanding, not for solipsistic scholarly display.

In late seventeenth-century England, one of the more significant arguments about textual knowledge and the methodology of scholarship took place between Dr Richard Bentley, and the Christ Church mentors of the young aristocrat Charles Boyle. In his ‘Essay upon the ancient and modern learning’<sup>27</sup> Sir William Temple had singled out for applause the Epistles attributed to Phalaris, a sixth-century BC tyrant of Acragas in Sicily. In part encouraged by Temple’s essay, a new edition of the *Epistles* (published at Oxford in 1695) was prepared at Christ Church by Charles

23. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.229.

24. There were certainly exceptions which proved Le Clerc’s rule, amongst them Nicolas Heinsius’s Elsevier edition of Claudian (1661).

25. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.230.

26. Le Clerc, *Parrhasiana* (1701), p.231.

27. Printed in William Temple’s *Miscellanea: the second part* (London, Richard Simpson, 1690).

Boyle, at the invitation of Dean Aldrich, and with the help of more senior Christ Church men. Bentley responded to the Christ Church sponsorship of Phalaris with a short 'Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris', appended to the second edition of William Wotton's *Reflections upon ancient and modern learning*. Bentley's 'Dissertation' demonstrated that the extant Epistles were a much later production, probably by a sophist of the second century AD. Christ Church responded in *Dr Bentley's dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris [...] Examin'd by the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esq.*, actually written by a team made up of Francis Atterbury, George Smalridge, Robert Freind, John Freind and Anthony Alsop. Bentley retorted in a vastly expanded, and separately published, version of the *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris, With an answer to the objections of the Honourable Charles Boyle*.

There is little difference between Bentley and 'Boyle' as to format of demonstration. Bentley's *Dissertation*, and the *Examination* by 'Boyle', both present themselves as heavily documented scholarly works. 'Boyle', however, is altogether more squeamish about the methodologies of 'pedantry' and their apparatuses, in particular extensive, untranslated, local quotation; just those practices in fact on which Bayle and Le Clerc insisted. 'Boyle' excuses himself to the reader for 'that mixture of Latin and Greek, with which I am forc'd to vary this Odd Work of mine'.<sup>28</sup> He pronounces himself 'so far from valuing my self upon a multitude of quotations, that I wish there had been no occasion for those few I have produc'd'. He cites La Bruyère and St Evremond, for Bentley's instruction, as examples of 'Writers [...] who think well, and speak Justly, and quote little'.<sup>29</sup> He regularly breaks out of the drudgery of scholarly quotation to pursue an extended and elaborate discourse of anti-pedantic satire, during which there is little occasion for learned apparatus.

For Bentley, by contrast, scholarly documentation is a matter neither of routine nor distaste. Despite its title, the *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris* is not so much a continuous thesis as a series of detailed interpretative interventions, addressing highly specific passages in a long work, supported by much evidence, not only detailed but highly specific, from classical, more particularly Greek, literature, history and philosophy. His cases are made from learning, both familiar and first-hand, in versification, chronology, geography, numismatics, biography, literature and history. Every point in the argument, every logical deduction, is supported from numerous angles, by the analysis of apposite

28. Charles Boyle, *Dr Bentley's dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris, and the fables of Aesop, examin'd by the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esq.* (London, Thomas Bennet, 1698), p.68.

29. Boyle, *Dr Bentley's dissertation*, p.228.

contextual evidence.<sup>30</sup> Notes, in the form of marginalia, certify and validate this apparatus, with references, demonstrations, parallels, original language quotations (in Latin and Greek) for translations provided within the text,<sup>31</sup> and with instructions to the reader to consult analogous confirming instances.

The standards of proof and detailed methodology of citation that Bentley deploys and exemplifies he also requires of others. Boyle is excoriated many times for his failures adequately to identify and understand his sources, to assess the nature of his authorities, even, on occasion, to have read the works he cites:

A certain Writer has accused Mr *B.* of a false Citation of *Plutarch's* Life of *Theseus*; for there's no such thing as he quotes in that Life [...] To this Mr *B.* replies, That he owns he was misled by *Jul. Scaliger*; who affirms the thing, but quotes no body for it; And *perhaps*, says Mr *B.* further, *I was too hasty in not fully considering the whole passage of Plutarch in the Life of Cimon, relating to this matter* [...] But [...] he quotes not the Life of *Cimon*, but the Life of *Theseus* [...] So that he quoted *Plutarch at a venture*, without looking into him at all. Where's the truth then of his *not FULLY considering*?<sup>32</sup>

Yet more fundamentally, for Bentley as a leading methodologist of the Enlightenment, Boyle's assertions are brutally dismissed where they lack evidential basis:

It is not his Talent, to give Light to any thing; but rather to make it darker than it was before. It cannot reasonably, he says, *be question'd*. Why not I pray? Because it would be a *Question*, that He could not answer. I know no other *unreasonableness* in questioning it; for he has not one Authority for what he supposes here.<sup>33</sup>

Repeatedly Boyle as author of the *Examination* is joshed as one who knows his materials at second hand, an Oxford scholar unfamiliar with books even 'in the publick Library at *Oxon*', a man who does not know how to use a catalogue, dependent on 'his Assistant [...] *that consulted Books for him*'.<sup>34</sup>

In these respects Bentley's *Dissertation* reflects European developments in scholarly method. I would wish to argue that those developments, the practices and positions adumbrated by Simon, Bayle and Le Clerc, are

30. For example, in support of his insistence that Thericles was a potter, not a magistrate, Bentley lists and quotes 'no fewer than ten witnesses'; Richard Bentley, *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris, With an answer to the objections of the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esq.* (London, Henry Mortlock, 1699), p.109-10, 127.

31. In the 1697 edition of Bentley's *Dissertation*, quotations in the Greek and Latin had been made within the text.

32. Bentley, *Dissertation*, p.284-85; p.21.

33. Bentley, *Dissertation*, p.294.

34. Bentley, *Dissertation*, p.408, 410, 378.

reflected too in Bentley's editorial practice. That is in some respects a surprising claim. Far from following Le Clerc's humanist encouragement to open, explanatory, useful editorial commentary, Bentley's Latin notes, in his editions of Horace and Manilius, focus remorselessly on textual matters. The Phalaris *Dissertation* is in its form fragmentary, discontinuous, addressing specific textual issues with specific evidence. The task of editorial commentary is in its very nature concerned with the specific textual moment, and it offered a still more congenial intellectual form for Bentley's methods. Bentley indulges frequently in gladiatorial combat with editorial opponents, fighting for apparently little patches of textual ground, but very rarely provides the less-expert reader with explanation or context. However, though the investigation of variant readings is not explanatory, it is potentially, and in Bentley's hands regularly, interpretative. For Bentley the choice amongst variants was not controlled only by what was witnessed by the manuscripts: 'to us reason and the thing in itself are better than a hundred codices' ('nobis & ratio & res ipsa centum codicibus potiores sunt'), he famously remarked in his notes to Horace's Odes.<sup>35</sup> The words are often quoted, and may be read with different emphases, but certainly indicate that for Bentley editorial choices, in classical texts, must primarily be made on the basis of the sense of the text, as constrained by cultural and linguistic possibility, and only secondarily as confirmed by the documentary tradition. Bentley presented in multiple parallel passages the evidence for the cultural and linguistic possibilities of rival readings, as his Dutch forebears had done. Unlike those forebears, however, Bentley did not merely cite but regularly quoted his parallel passages in full, aware of the evidential and persuasive value of doing so. Bentley was also newly careful, as far as English editorial practice was concerned, about attributing readings to previous scholars. In earlier English editions – Gale's 1675 *Library* of Apollodorus is an example – the scholarly provenance of possible textual emendations was not made clear; indeed, a convention was to write 'lego', I read, to indicate not 'I personally propose', but 'I choose amongst possibilities previously suggested by others'.<sup>36</sup>

I suggested at the start that the new methodologies of documentation had implications for scholarly editing, as well as for historical and biographical writing. I hope already to have indicated some of the intellectual and epistemological potentialities it offered. A full account of the development of those potentialities in English literary editing in

35. On Odes III.xxvii.15; R. Bentley, *In Q. Horatium Flaccum Notae & Emendationes Richardi Bentleii* (Cambridge, 1711), p.147.

36. I owe this point to Kristine Haugen, *Richard Bentley: poetry and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA), p.26-27, 48.

the eighteenth century would require another essay, or another chapter, but I would like to set out some possible directions of such an account.

There is at least one clear and acknowledged line of inheritance from the new Enlightenment methodology. Lewis Theobald, who demolished Alexander Pope's 1725 edition of Shakespeare in his *Shakespeare restored*, was a professed admirer of Bentley.<sup>37</sup> In his own edition of Shakespeare, published by Tonson in 1733, but more emphatically in the *Shakespeare restored*, Theobald adopted the Benteleian method of numerous fully-quoted parallel passages, from Shakespeare himself and from other writers, to establish the possible senses of words and idioms as a way of discriminating amongst variant readings. This tight integration of explication and textual comment in Theobald's editorial decision-making echoes Bentley, and would be a characterising feature of English editions of Shakespeare throughout the eighteenth century. It is especially powerful in the multiplied parallels of George Steevens, the reviser of Samuel Johnson's *Shakespeare*,<sup>38</sup> and in the more selective but often more decisive parallels adduced by Edmond Malone in his great 1790 apparatus.<sup>39</sup> Such an integration of textual choice and textual understanding remains – as A. E. Housman amongst others confirms – a theoretically convincing position. There is an echo of Bentley too, in the citation practices of the eighteenth-century variorum editors, who invariably acknowledged the authorship of previous editorial comments, even if they rarely provided very detailed references.

There is also a second, perhaps less obvious, line of inheritance, which is known to literary historiographers but which, I have argued,<sup>40</sup> may also be traced in some late eighteenth-century Shakespearean editing. Bayle's *Dictionary* had a particularly powerful effect on English letters after it appeared in two separate English versions in 1734. William Oldys was one of the English scholars who contributed largely to *A General dictionary, historical and critical: in which a new and accurate translation of that of the celebrated Mr Bayle [...] is included*.<sup>41</sup> In his own practices Oldys was like Bayle an obsessive collector of knowledge. His first important printed publi-

37. Lewis Theobald, *Shakespeare restored* (London, R. Francklin, 1726).

38. For discussion of Steevens's editorial methods, see Marcus Walsh, 'George Steevens and the 1778 variorum: a hermeneutics and a social economy of annotation', in *Shakespeare and the eighteenth century*, ed. Peter Sabor and Paul Yachnin (Aldershot and Burlington, ON, 2008), p.71-83.

39. Edmond Malone (ed.), *The Plays and poems of William Shakspeare*, 10 vols in 11 (London, J. Rivington et al., 1790).

40. Marcus Walsh, 'Fragments and disquisitions: Johnson's Shakespeare in context', in *Samuel Johnson: new contexts for a new century*, ed. Howard Weinbrot (San Marino, Huntington Library, 2014), pp. 157-72.

41. *A General dictionary, historical and critical: in which a new and accurate translation of that of the celebrated Mr Bayle [...] is included* (London, G. Strahan et al., 1734).

cation was an edition of Raleigh's *History of the world*, with Oldys's 'Life of the author, newly compil'd, from materials more ample and authentick than have yet been publish'd'.<sup>42</sup> Oldys wrote compulsively and continuously in the margins and between the lines of his own books, most famously in his two copies of William Langbaine's *Account of the English dramattick poets*,<sup>43</sup> but also in copies of *England's Parnassus*, *Hudibras*, John Philips's *Life of Milton*, William Nicolson's *English Scotch and Irish historical libraries*, and Fuller's *Worthies*, and no doubt others. The habit parallels that of Bentley and his Dutch predecessors. Oldys's two annotated copies of Langbaine circulated amongst Shakespearean commentators and editors rather as the manuscript research materials, the *Nachlass*, of Joseph Scaliger were passed on to later Dutch scholars, and indeed to Bentley himself.<sup>44</sup> Oldys's copies of Langbaine were used, transcribed and extracted particularly by Thomas Percy, Edmond Malone, Isaac Reed and George Steevens. Steevens printed 'Anecdotes of Shakespeare, from Oldys's Mss. &c.' in the 1778 variorum Shakespeare.<sup>45</sup>

Oldys's Langbaine has often been thought of as a formal as well as a substantial resource for later eighteenth-century literary history. An instance of its influence is Thomas Warton's *History of English poetry*,<sup>46</sup> where the narrative is continually interrupted by long bibliographical and documentary digressions, and never approaches its endpoint.<sup>47</sup> The inheritance of Bayle and Oldys is most spectacularly evident in Edmond Malone's extraordinary life of Shakespeare, as it appeared in the editions of 1790 and 1821. Here, as though mirroring Pierre Bayle, the thin stream of Nicholas Rowe's standard 1709 *Life of Shakespeare*, with all its inaccuracies and myths, meanders superficially on the page over the

42. Raleigh, *History of the world*, 2 vols (London, G. Conyers et al., 1736).

43. William Langbaine, *Account of the English dramattick poets* (Oxford, G. West and H. Clements, 1691).

44. See Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, p.136.

45. For fuller discussion of Oldys's Langbaine, see William Thomas Lowndes, *The Bibliographer's manual of English literature*, new edition, revised, corrected, and enlarged by H. G. Bohn, 6 vols (London, 1857-1864), see under 'Langbaine'; and Marcus Walsh, 'Literary scholarship and the life of editing', in *Books and their readers in the eighteenth century*, ed. Isabel Rivers (London and New York, 2001), p.191-215 (207-208). See also Paul Baines, 'Oldys, William (1696-1761)', in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford, 2004; online edn, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/article/20699?docPos=5>, [last accessed 12 January 2016]).

46. Thomas Warton, *The History of English poetry, from the close of the eleventh to the commencement of the eighteenth century*, 3 vols (London, J. Dodsley and others, 1774, 1778, 1781).

47. Warton himself remarks, 'I have chosen to exhibit the history of our poetry in a chronological series: not distributing my matter into detached articles, or periodical divisions, or of general heads. Yet I have not always adhered so scrupulously to the regularity of annales, but that I have often deviated into incidental digressions; and have sometimes stopped in the course of my career'; Warton, *The History of English poetry*, vol.1, p.iii-iv.

depths of Malone's deconstructing notes, based for the most part on Malone's own Baylean reading in the primary documents. Here Rowe's storytelling is shipwrecked on the sharp rocks of Malone's professionally exact knowledge. Malone's founding intellectual assumptions, and scholarly method, were entirely opposed to a continuous discourse in which particularities of detailed citation, consideration and application of evidence have to yield to the pressures of narrative. The biographical dramatisation, romance and legend of Rowe's account, its reliance on tradition, are replaced by Malone with a thoroughgoing attempt to establish, so far as surviving documentary evidence or substantiable oral accounts allow, the facts of Shakespeare's life, in its relation to the world he lived in. Rowe's life was no forgery, but it was often a fiction, a narrative construction that belonged to a pre-Enlightenment world of literary interpretation and consumption. For Malone, the Shakespeare of story must be replaced by credible knowledge, and evidence needed to be cited where it bore on the argument.<sup>48</sup>

For Malone, as for Bentley or Oldys, the validating appeal at critical points to authentic and primary evidence, referenced exactly and quoted at length, took precedence over the sequential progress of the history of a life, the structural logic of narrative, or the ordered chronology of history. In this they are heirs of Simon, and more especially of Bayle, and Le Clerc. The Enlightenment encyclopaedia and variorum edition, and even the literary history, became increasingly characterised not by smooth discursive flow, but by the serial analysis of particular facts and semantic or textual cruxes, what Bayle had referred to as a 'miscellany of proofs and discussions'. A writer to the *Gentleman's magazine*, in 1784, wrote of Oldys, as if it were a criticism, that 'He was an excellent picker-up of facts and materials; but had [little power] of arranging them, or connecting them by intermediate ideas'.<sup>49</sup> Quite so. Oldys had not been in the business of writing narrative or disquisition, any more than Bayle, or Bentley, or Malone. These practitioners of the new methodology set out to demolish fraud, and on their own account set out to tell no stories.

48. For a more extended account of the methodology and underpinning research of Malone's *Life of Shakespeare*, see Peter Martin, *Edmond Malone, Shakespearean scholar: a literary biography* (Cambridge, 1995), p.123-35. For a briefer discussion, focussing on Malone's expansion, documentation and controversion of Rowe's *Life*, see Marcus Walsh, 'Edmond Malone', in *Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Malone*, ed. Claude Rawson (London, 2010), p.160-99 (183-88), vol.1 of *Great Shakespearians*.

49. *Gentleman's magazine* 54 (1784), p.260, quoted by Lipking, *Ordering of the arts*, p.72.